Congo News Letter

JUNE 1958

CONGO NEWS LETTER

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*THIS IS OUR TASK**

To be ministers of a divine office — for them, the Congolese;
To make the word of God fully known;
To reveal the mystery
hidden for ages and generations from the Africans,
which is Christ in you, Christ in them, the hope of glory.

This task we are to fulfill by proclamation,
by warning,
and by teaching every man in all wisdom.
We approach our task with diligence,
through toil and striving,
pouring out our energy,
yet always with the inspiration of the living Christ.

We suffer, but we rejoice in our suffering
because we know that we are competing in our own flesh
what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ.
And always the objective of our work is the Church,
the fellowship of the redeemed,
that we may present every man mature in Christ.
Our task is clear.

— JAMES L. SPRIGG

**as outlined by Paul in the first chapter of Colossians.*

LIFT UP YOUR EYES

By James L. Sprigg

I HOPE the Congo missionaries will always have a deep appreciation of the actual physical setting in which they work. I recall that when I first arrived in the Philippines I used to go into raptures over the tropical beauty of those "pearls of the Orient." The long rows of stately palms; the graceful feathery bamboos swaying softly in the breeze; the green rice fields; and above the purple mountains of Antique in the west, the whitest clouds in the bluest sky imaginable. My Filipino friends used to laugh at me. "The country here is just the same as anywhere else," they would say. We all have a tendency to take for granted the commonplace goodness, truth and beauty.

As a high school boy in Iowa, I used to spend my summers working on the farm. There too I used to find inspiration in the profusion of wild roses that bloom along the country roads in midsummer, and the silhouetted shocks of grain against an August sunset. One time the farmer's wife said to me, "When you have so much work to do, you don't have time to appreciate the beauty." May it never be said of Congo missionaries that they are so busy they do not have time to thank God for the loveliness of the physical setting in which God has called them to work. For the Congo is a land of tremendous beauty, and I trust that time and again you will lift up your eyes unto the hills and thank God for the wonder of it all.

I sensed this wonder as I rode along the road from Nsona Mpangu to old Banza Manteke. What magnificent horizons! In "The Nun's Story," one of the sisters was made to say, "Oh those horizons; you can never forget those horizons." Now I know whereof she spoke.

You sense this wonder as you look up at the Bangu from Kimpese. Sometimes you see it against a clear blue sky; sometimes it is shrouded in mist. But always it is lovely, and one cannot help saying inwardly, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou badst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God."

I have stood beside historic Sims Chapel in Léopoldville and watched the mighty Congo flowing swiftly past. I have seen men in dug-out canoes being carried quickly by the current across the Kwilu at Vanga. I have seen the sunrise across the Wamba river from Kikongo. And God has said, "O that thou hadst hearkened unto my commandments. Then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea."

I have watched the sunset across the valley of the Inzia from the picnic grounds at Moanza, and I have been mindful that "He sendeth the springs into the valleys which run among the hills." We sat in that blessed spot until twilight thickened and the stars came out. The crackling campfire pushed back the damp chill which rose from the valley and in that lovely setting we sang hymns and prayed.

As you approach Boko from the North , and see that beautiful new station with its metal roofs glistening like gems in the sunlight, set as it is in the midst of hills and forests, it is like a city in the wilderness, a city of refuge.

We walked at night along the hilltop at Sona Bata, and as the cool evening breeze swept over us, a line from a poem came to mind. It was written by Louise Rounds, one of the missionary martyrs in the Philippines. "Lord, keep a clean wind blowing through my heart."

There is a loveliness to the actual physical setting here in Congo. One can draw inspiration from it if he sees it with the eyes of faith and recognizes it as a glorious evidence of God's creative work. There are many problems here in Congo. But one problem which does not exist is that of riding to work twice a day on a crowded subway with millions of sweating, cursing, unbelievably discourteous people. God sometimes speaks to us in those subways where cross the crowded ways of life. But God speaks to us also from the montains and rivers and the star-studded brilliance of the African night sky.

But the setting in which one works consists not alone of trees, flowers, mountains, rivers, and forests. It consists of people. Our success as missionaries is determined as much by our attitude toward the Africans as by any other one factor. They are a lovable people. Before I left for Congo, I was told, "You'll love the

Congolese. They are open, friendly, kind and generous." This is true to a degree, but perhaps in some respects they are not always as lovable as they once were. For along with the blessings of Christianity have come the evils of so called civilization. Conflicts grow out of the peculiar social, cultural, economic and political forces at work in the Congo today, and we see the results of this inevitable conflict of forces within the congolese. Yet it is gratifying to meet such wonderful people as Lukombo and Yikulwadio at Banza Manteke; Kimpiatu and Tschebele at Sona Bata; Lubikulu and Mama Mattie at Léo; Kapini at Vanga; and Kisaka at Boko. As long as there are great souls like these in our work, we ought not to be in despair.

WIN THEM WHILE THEY WAIT

For some time it had been felt at Boko that there should be a Bible woman to work among the prenatal and maternity women, many of whom are there at the maternity for as long a time as two-and-a-half months. For months there have been from 25 to 40 women in this group, most of them unable to read, and very ignorant as to the way of Salvation. Morning chapel is held in the hospital, and later in the dispensary, daily, and those able are urged to attend the morning chapel in the church, but it takes a long time before they begin to understand the great significance of this wonderful message. "For this people's heart is waxed gross, their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed, lest at any time they should see . . . . hear . . . . understand with their heart, and should be converted and I should heal them."

Because of this need, Mama Nsimba Madeleine was asked to work with the waiting women. She goes several times a week to read Scripture to them and to talk to them about their soul's needs. She prays with them, and for them. We pray that God will bless and bring to fruition any work that is faithfully done for Him, and we praise Him for this wonderful opportunity.

— ALICE O. JORGENSON

REUNION AND REDISTRIBUTION

By Martha Emmert

"LITTLE drops of water Make a lot of mud, 3 miles to B.M., Hope you make it Bud !" Such greetings along the road to Banza Manteke were the froth of our deep joy in anticipating the arrival of the ABFMS family for our first retreat and *conseil* in Congo. The little drops of water were kind to us and *Bud* Fraser did make it, as well as most of our colleagues, without getting stuck. As at most reunions one feels keenly, amidst the laughter, the absence of loved members of the family. We missed seeing Suzy Brown and Jean Abell because of ill health. We also missed meeting Dr. and Mrs. Osterholm of Vanga. Esther Greenmun had just begun the tropical medicine course at Léopoldville and couldn't come. The other absent ones were farther away — we especially missed former field secretary Ben and Rhoda Armstrong — but we thought of *each* one who belongs to our Congo family. Yes, we even claim those in Belgium who have yet to see Congo for the first time.

One thing we had looked forward to on a mission field was fellowship with others of the same mind and purpose and work. We had tasted this fellowship on the stations at Kimpese and here at B.M., but had never partaken en masse before. What a reunion when the trucks all arrived from the *gare* with everyone aboard. What joy to see again our old friends and to meet those who were yet only honorable names. Tired feet were forgotten. We were together again and one in Christ. One tends to cling selfishly to such things and to lean upon them, yet there are those who are willing to sacrifice these times of refreshing that the money may be used more directly to benefit those whom we have come to serve. By having the meetings only bi-annually we cannot expect to attend again until 1962 because we will miss the 1960 meeting during our furlough.

The time spent together in prayer, Bible study and discussion was very rewarding. To worship in English once more was like finding an oasis in the desert. At home we never stopped to think how blessed it is that we all speak one language. Our medi-

tations were on Phil. 3 : 10, "That I may know Him." We were challenged in our inner lives to seek to known Him in His fullness. None of us will ever forget Jim Sprigg's "Impressions of Congo" nor his other evening discussions, counseling, directing and encouraging us. We all felt as though he had become one of us; he had sat where we sit; he understandswith compassion this country and people, yet by his objective analysis he gave us a new grip on our faith and a new determination to face the future with courage.

We all seemed to feel that more time and prayer must be given to the evangelistic effort and the training of Christians especially in stewardship. We feel as John Geil must have felt when he wrote in *Congo News Letter* of April 1933, "The natives have no right to expect the missionaries and people in the homelands to do for them things which they can do for themselves and it is only when they have gone as far as they can go, and done all which they can do, that they can look to the Lord and his followers for needed help." And farther on . . . ." there was a strong tendency to break away from anything and everything in the way of definite and regular giving and to leave the support of the work with the mission where it was considered to be quite safe. Consequently there was need of being instant in season and out of season, teaching, preaching, admonishing and in some instances commanding . ." This need still exists and we are humbled by our failure to teach it effectively.

Because the *Conseil* was held here on our station following the Retreat, we were privileged to attend these business meetings of missionary and Congolese delegates from each of our stations. We visited the committees and heard the discussions, sometimes lasting far into the night. We watched while these committees brought their recommendations to the assembled group. How the interest quickened especially among the Congolese when the administration committee presented the board of missionary personnel with the suggested designations, some involving changes. On the whole it seemed as though there was a concern for the total work and not the demands of one station at the expense of another. Perhaps the people are beginning to realize that missionaries and money are not unlimited and that there is a world of lost people outside of Congo to care about too. Colon

Kapini, who recently attended conferences in America helped a great deal in widening horizons and showing lessons in Christian living which he had observed while there.

To us it was a wonderful reunion. A reunion of missionaries, of Christian leaders with whom we work. of all of our potential, that we might evaluate, appreciate and consecrate all of it to this task we find before us. But reunions must end and so the prayerful redistribution of money, personnel, and responsibilities must be made, with the hope that the decisions will seem just to all and be a means of more effective witness for the cause of Christ in Congo.

FIRT IMPRESSIONS— A LAND OF CONTRASTS

By Virginia and Orville Chapman

A LAND of contrasts ! That was our first impression of the Congo. It was the thing that struck us on that memorable day which we spent on a jolting little train between Matadi, where our ship landed, and Sona Bata, which is our new home. Immediately we were thrilled by the natural beauty of this area — the rolling hills and forests, the stately palms and the swiftly moving rivers. Then among this landscape we noticed the primitive villages in which the Congolese people live. These little mud and grass houses may look picturesque in travel magazines and anthropological reviews but in real life they are utterly lacking in what to our minds at least is beauty and comfort in a home.

We hadn't been here very long before we were impressed by the contrast in the cultural levels of men and women. Most of the men wear European style clothes which are often well starched and nicely ironed. Many of the men speak French and some are learning English. The Congolese men are trying hard to keep pace with a fast changing world. The women, however, on the on the whole are much less advanced. They still dress and do their work very much as they have for centuries. You very seldom meet a woman who can or will speak French. Of course there

are a few exceptions, but on the whole the women are far behind their menfolk.

Anyone who thinks all of Africa is still jungle ought to visit Leopoldville where red and green signals control the traffic along tree lined boulevards, where we can shop in super-markets and find almost anything one can buy at home, and where Congolese sit behind shiny desks in modern office buildings. This is all part of Congo today. But we are speaking of contrasts, and not too many kilometers from this modern city you may visit villages where a string of beads constitutes an adequate costume and where you may have difficulty finding someone who can read. This too is Africa today.

And then there are our churches. How we wish that we could say that here there are no contrasts — that all of the churches are living, growing, Spirit-filled churches which are leading more and more people to a knowledge of God's Salvation in His Son. We thank God that many of our Churches do fit this description. What an inspiration they are to the visiting missionary. But our hearts ache that even here we must admit that there are contrasts. In our area of the Congo there are at least five different so called "Prophet movements" which are draining many of our Churches of members. Many Africans feel that these movements are more truly African than the Christian Church which they associate with the white man. Many seem to be waiting for a Black Messiah. We hope and pray that those who have been led astray may see their folly and come to trust completely in Christ who is the only Way to the Father and who died for men of all colors and all races.

Perhaps the greatest contrast of all is that which we see when we compare our Christian leaders with those who are still living in darkness and following their old superstitions. What a change comes into the lives and faces of those who now have a direction and a purpose in life. We have been constantly impressed by the devotion of our Christian leaders who stand up for Christ despite persecution from their own people. In this land of contrasts we have been conscious in a new way that if anyone be in Christ he is a new Creature, the old has passed away, the new has come.

"THIS IS WHAT I HEARD"

By Edward B. Willingham

"I COULD not hear what he was saying," commented a missionary as one of the Africans in a discussion group ceased talking. We had clearly heard the voice of the speaker but his dialect was strange.

Our interpreter meant that he had not understood what had been said. The expression "to hear," meaning to understand another's speech, has been used by others as we have visited several countries in Africa. Always, it has carried the same connotation.

A limited knowledge of French, and a total ignorance of African dialects, prevented our "hearing" much that was said at mission conferences in Ghana, Nigeria and the Belgian Congo during recent months. We are thankful to friends who helped us to understand, in part, and to hear the language of Christian missions on this great continent. The grasp of a white westerner cannot claim to be comprehensive but this is an effort to share something which I "heard" in Africa.

One is impressed that the people of Africa have suddenly become world conscious and are increasingly articulate in asking how to share in the better things of human society. Dwellers in the vast area south of the Sahara Desert have only recently stepped from isolated tribal culture into the fast moving traffic of mankind. Sharp contrasts are bewildering and frustrating. Modern Léopoldville, for instance, with evident concentration of wealth, is within short distances of primitive villages with poverty, ignorance and superstition. Africans have become aware of progress in other parts of the world and are frantically struggling to catch up. One man asked the question, "What's wrong with us? We haven't so much as put a head on the end of a match!"

It is necessary to remember, however, that as recently as 1856 David Livingstone completed his first great journey from Mozambique to Angola. Stanley traveled from Zanzibar to the mouth of the Congo River just eighty years ago. Rome was not

built in a day, nor will Africa be transformed overnight. One hundred twenty million disunited people need the sympathy, understanding and patience of the rest of the world.

The economic development which is certain to come in Africa must be directed by Christian ideals and principles. The church of Jesus Christ must help the black man to fulfill the destiny which God has for him in the Kingdom plan. Pliny wrote, "Something new is always coming out of Africa." The new day for this continent must be under the banner of the Cross and that can only happen if the gospel is adequately proclaimed with conviction and without delay. There is challenge and promise — or peril ! — as these undeveloped people demand a place in the sun.

American Baptists are thankful for the consecration and witness of the 97 missionaries now assigned to the Belgian Congo under our Foreign Mission Societies. The Banza Manteke mission dates back to 1879. A roll call of those who have served in the growing work through the years would list saints who have labored well, and in some instances there are gravestones in Africa to mark their devotion even unto death. Now there are eight fields in which we are preaching through churches, evangelists, schools, Bible women, hospitals, clinics and Christian Centers for women.

Conditions under which the work is done today are radically different from those in the days of the pioneer missionaries. The problems are different, also, and much more complex. But there are over 50,000 church members today to lend encouragement and about 3, 000 nationals in various places of Christian leadership. Over 34,000 pupils are enrolled in the schools. Patients in the hospitals are numbered by the thousands and baptisms for a recent year were 5,185. We witnessed a baptismal service at Mbanza Dibundu when 255 were baptized before a large throng of people.

The days ahead will be exciting ones in Africa. Missionaries may have experiences that try their faith and patience but thank God the doors are open to the gospel message. We are grateful for the joint leadership that will give guidance to our ABFMS work under Mr. James L. Sprigg, new Administrative Secretary for Africa, and Mr. Chester J. Jump, Jr., new Secretary for the

Congo. We hope that additional workers may be found to enter the doors that are open so wide. We join hands with other Christians in responding to the cry of Africa to train her boys and girls to become men and women of Christian stature for leadership tomorrow.

A DELEGATE'S EYE VIEW OF THE MEETINGS IN GHANA AND NIGERIA

By Jean V. Lubikulu

A.B.F.M.S. pastor at Léopoldville

THE evening of December 24, 1957 I left Léopoldville, arriving that same evening — Christmas Eve — at Accra. During the two days which preceded the meetings, the International Missionary Council, a friend of our Congo Protestant Council secretary took us in his plane to visit a Mission builtby a German group in 1828. It is now run by Presbyterians. During these days we saw many churches, most of them protestant.

December 28 our meetings began. I was surprised to hear only English used for I had understood that both French and English would be spoken. I was very sorry that I could not understand everything, for the English was of all kinds, and most of it hard to follow. One thing I did know and understand — the purpose of the meeting was to better understand the one true God who send his Son into the world to save all who believe on him. All together we were about two hundred attending, coming from such varied places as South Africa, Germany, Australia, Burma, Canada, Chile, Madagascar, Mexico, Hong Kong the U.S. and many many other parts of the world.

We were all one in Christ. We ate together, we prayed together, we talked together in spite of our many differences, for the name of Jesus was honored by all of us.

One unfortunate point of these meetings was the division of the delegates as to whether or not the IMC should become a part of the World Council of Churches. Because we knew that some of our brother missions in Congo would leave the Congo

Protestant Council if it, as a member of IMC, became affiliated with WCC, the delegates from Congo felt forced to stand against this step. It was felt that the Congo Protestant Council is so necessary to the ongoing of Protestant Mission work in Congo that we could not jeopardize its existence even though we sympathized with and agreed with younger Asian churches and others that union with this larger body could only strengthen the witness of the Christian church especially in the many countries where it is weak and in the minority. In spite of the division on this one issue we *are* one body in Christ, and we know this and we parted from each other in good will.

On the 10th I went to Nigeria. At Lagos we changed from airplane to bus, and after four and a half hours of riding we arrived at Ibadan. Others were already gathered for the Meeting. Dr. Carpenter, former ABFMS missionary to the Congo, came out to greet us. The next morning we registered and got badges of identification. This meeting in Ibadan was the first such meeting of the whole African church. Delegates were there from all over Africa, and visitors and observers from Europe and America, too. The main purpose was to seek ways and means to build one church in Africa. We don't want our church divided as it is in many other countries.

We discussed how we can train up our youth to be leaders in the church. The young people themselves are in a hard position, being pulled by the world and the church. It is our responsibility to help them to understand their place in the church.

We talked about recruiting young men for the ministry. We must work with them while they are still in primary school. We talked about the Christian family and how we can help to build it. Many families move a great deal in this new age. We must help them particularly, or else they will lose their faith. They must be helped to mantain contact with the church wherever they go.

The Christian's relationship with the State was also discussed. The state must be honored, but we must learn to differentiate between good and bad. We must take a stand against the bad. Other topics were discussed, too, but all had to do with Jesus Christ, the Lord of all tribes in the whole world.

IT HARD TO CATCH ON, BUT

By Donald S. Deer

"YOU certainly don't catch on very fast," said our Kikongo teacher. "Even illiterate little Congolese children can pronounce that word." It was our second day at Sona Bata, our fourth in Congo. At that point, we were perfectly willing to concede the overwhelming superiority of those illiterate little Congolese children.

No, we dont't catch on very fast. "Kikongo", say the Congolese, "is a very easy language." The very same people, however, will say that we missionaries are far from using it very well. This kind of contradiction can be seen in the following ideas as well. "Kikongo is written just as it's spoken", they say. "But, of course, some words that are spelled the same are pronounced differently !"

But the Congolese are not alone in thinking that this language is simple. An American friend from Leopoldville was quite incredulous when told that the language has several tenses and presents diverse complications. "That's impossible in a primitive society", he said. "Take the matter of family relationships.

One word, for example, can mean father, or paternal uncle, or mother's sister's husband. Another can refer to one's maternal uncle's wife, or to a parent-in-law, or to a child-in-law (stop me if these words don't exist in English), and his or her parents, or to one's husband's sister's child, or to a sister's child-in-law, or to a grandchild's spouse, or to one's maternal grandfather's siblings (brothers and sisters, that is). Does that seem confusing? I guess you'll agree that it's hard to catch on. I'm not even 100 % sure that I have it right, but you get the idea. In case, it's no more confusing to us than certain of our terms are to them. They are quite surprised to learn that "uncle" can be used for either one's father's brother *or* one's mother's brother. In a way, it's consoling to know that they can be as confused in French as we are in Kikongo. One day, out on the, road, the man travelling with me asked me, in French, if we could make a short detour to see his "elder (or eldest) mother". Knowing that his father was not

polygamous, it took me a while to figure out why he had made that mistake in French. He was actually talking about his mother's older sister, but I didn't find that out until yesterday. Do you feel at this point like it wouldn't be hard to be "your own grandpa" ?

The moral of this story is that one has to know several brands of each language. Boning up on French "as she should be spoke", for example, is not enough. When kids along the road greet you with a cheery "good evening" early in the morning, you mustn't get upset. They're not trying to be funny. They just speak French the Congo way, and it pays to understand that way, too.

Yes, "it's hard to catch on." But it goes further than languages and concepts of family relationships. It involves all sorts of ideas of birth, life, and death. The similarity in dress between Congolese boys and their overseas counterparts can be quite misleading. It covers up an ocean of difference in ways of thinking. Sometimes we think we're thinking along the same lines but we're not. Take the matter of salvation, for instance. A great number who consider themselves Christians are nevertheless — closer to the mentality of those Jews in Jesus' time who expected a very materialistic salvation. As one Congolese said recently, "Get on God's side, and you'll really be set; no worries, no stomach aches, and your food cupboard and your pocketbook will always be full. Yes, it's hard to "catch on," especially to the meaning of the cross.

Fortunately, these are not our only impressions. Happily, that is not the final word. What is more important is that some people do "catch on", that some do have an understanding of what the good news is really about. One of our teachers, for instance, has accepted all kinds of disappointments and setbacks, only to start again, in a cheerfulness that sets him off as a man who knows what it is to be close to God through Jesus Christ. And finally what ultimate difference does it make that it's hard to catch on, when we consider God's schedule. For He does not count as we do. His wisdom is not our wisdom. And it is to that Eternal Wisdom that we must entrust the future of the Church of Christ in Congo. Doing that, we will need to work, but we will not need to fear for the kingdom work in this land.

E. P. I. — EXTRA CURRICULAR

By Ethel Brown

"*THE Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them on . . . into every town and place . . .*" so, too, do groups of our students go out on Sundays to the nearby towns to teach and preach the Gospel. They are very happily received by the village people, who often beg them to come back again soon. One mile from the school is a commercial center where there are several "camps" in which workmen live who are working for the railroad and various other companies. This is one of the places where the students go and there are villages all around us, some as far as 10 miles where they go on foot, leaving on Saturday afternoon so as to be there for an early morning service. They themselves find joy and blessing in this service and it keeps fresh their purpose in being here. We are gradually raising a fund for a chapel at the commercial center near us where regular services can be held and our students in the pastoral course can find a field for practical work.

"*And rejoice with joy and singing*" (*Isa. 35 : 2*). Our choir, which was begun many years ago has continued through the years, under the skillful leadership of members of the missionary staff and now under a Congolese leader, has been gaining fame. A small group taken out of the larger group of 40 is often asked to sing on special occasions in nearby towns and cities. And now from this group, eight have been chosen as one of the two Protestant choirs, to go to Belgium to the World Fair. These eight with their leader, will spend a few weeks in Belgium singing both at the Fair and in Belgian Protestant churches.

"*Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth . . .*" (*Ecc. 12 : 1*) EPI is a school for youth and so one phase of the outside activities is an organized program under the title of "*Jeunesse*". An evening is occupied with group meetings where various subjects are discussed and studied. There is one group interested in evangelization; they have special speakers and instruction and also practical work by joining the groups who go out on Sundays. There is a group interested in the appreciation

of music; another in literature; another in French pronunciation.

In the realm of literature, apart from their classroom instruction, those with creative ability are given an incentive to use this talent in the production of our school paper *Notre Progrès* (Our Progress). This is surpervised by a faculty member, but produced entirely by students. There are articles in French, showing real talent by some in the use of this languages; other articles are in *Kikongo*, the mother tongue of this area, giving them an opportunity to express themselves in writing and thus preserving their own language. Budding artists are also given a chance to express their talent in the illustrations. The paper is published every two months and sent out to about 600 people.

A school would not be complete without a program of sports, and so EPI has its sports. Every day from five o'clock to dark the ahtletic field is occupied with some kind of game or games. Each class has its football team and there is inter-class competition. They even play the faculty sometimes, also other teams from nearby places. They play basketball, volley ball and have other sports such as jumping and running. In this way good sportsmanship is encouraged as well as the development of the physical life.

The Student Council takes a good bit of time for certain ones. Each class has its representative and they meet once a week to discuss the many matters which come to them. They handle some cases of discipline but most of the time is taken in discussing how the student body can work together to make EPI a happy well disciplined community, serving its purpose to the best of its ability. These representatives show maturity of judgement and a keen desire to take responsibility.

The students at EPI have a full week of six days in classes, manual work in the afternoon of three days, and an evening study period on five days, but in addition to this they enter into these other organized activities with enthusiasm and thereby receive a well rounded training and find practical use for what they are studying. Throughout all the classes and extra-curricular activities, we strive to keep before them our only reason for having this school — that Christ may be glorified and people without Him may be brought to Him, their Saviour and Lord.

JUST ANOTHER BIG CITY?

By Jack and Trissie Rumohr

WHEN we heard that we were to be sent to Leopoldville, our first reaction was: "But that's just another big city, not a real mission station. !" Even now we often almost have to pinch ourselves to realize that this isn't a big city in Florida or Califor nia — it all seems too civilized to be a mission field.

One of the impressions we had almost at once was that there were hordes of people going everywhere all the time. Those that have bicycles (and there seem to be thousands of them) throng the cycle paths which parallel the roads nearly everywhere. Interspersed with them are pedestrians in uncounted number, in a continual going and coming that never really seems to stop And a question arises: Where are they going?

Aside from their physical destination, where are they going spiritually ? We can look in the churches of the city and find part of the answer, for they seem almost without exception to be packed. Our own Baptist Mission church is too small; the school is crowded, and more are turned away nearly every day. So we can assume that these people at least hear the Gospel, receive some education, and can find fellowhip to some extent with other Christians.

Yet, even in a large city like, this, there are those who are not reached. Part of the difficulty is in the sheer numbers involved. Only a handful of protestant missions work in Leo, and they cannot begin to meet the total need. Yet "the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." How can we reach these others. Who is leading them, and into what? We could reach them-if we had the money, the time, the personnel. But it takes much time, much effort, much money to train people and to win them for Christ. The fields are ready for the harvest, but the workers are all too few. This is one of the perpetual problems that one must learn to live with here.

I spend some time each week going around to three lay schools, in the vicinity of our mission, supervising the teaching of religion to protestant students. There are about eight hundred

of them in these three schools, and they receive three hours of instruction per week in religion by protestant teachers. Yet the time spent with each child individually is pitifully small, and so many of them need guidance. We should help them to choose a vocation, to let Christ figure in that decision, but there is not enought time in the day to talk to more than a handful, and the overworked teachers do not have the time either.

And, of course, there is the question of language. Leo is a particularly difficult place in which to learn a language because there are so many of them Everybody wants to come to Leo, so in addition to the three main languages — French, Kikongo, and Lingala — you often hear others, and many people who speak one of the three aforementioned languages do so with the constructions and idioms of their own dialect. The result for a green missionary is something approaching chaos. I learn how to say something in Kikongo and very often the first person I try it on will say that it isn't said that way in *his* area. And so on. So we struggle along, and now are beginning to understand a bit, but it goes slowly.

Life itself in *Léo* is surprisingly comfortable. The climate is hot, but not too hot for anyone who has sweltered in a Midwest heat wave, and it nearly always cools off at night. We have a nice house (best one we've lived in since we were married), the station itself is beautiful, and we have made many friends. We can walk out the back door and get hit on the head by a falling avocado pear (Trissie loves them. I with hold judgment), and in five minutes pick limes, lemons, papaya, bananas, mangos, and other fruits. Sometimes we feel sorry for the folks back home who are missing all this. All in all, we feel very much at home here.

Now that we have been here six months, what about the Congolese whom we've come to help ? What is our impression of them ? At first it was difficult to distinguish faces, but now we recognize many of them as friends. We don't yet understand them, because their culture is so different from ours. Sometimes we get exasperated because they don't think things important which we consider essential, and vice versa. But I'm sure they have at least as much trouble understanding us missionaries. They watch us very carefully, and this is what makes us more

aware than ever that what we are speaks very loudly indeed. To be Christlike when we would rather "blow our tops", this is the most important witness we can make to the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

When we first arrived, we were a little overwhelmed by all there is to be done on a mission station . Our conceptions of what is enough work for one day have, needless to say, enlarged considerably ! And yet there is still so much that needs to be done, some of it is just not done. Every day, as I go through the teeming streets, I realize again how great is the need for all the riches of the Gospel of Jesus Christ here. Thank God that there are many wonderful Christians among the Congolese, who can do so much more than we to win others. When you talk with some of these Congolese Christians, and realize what a long and difficult road they had to travel to attain things which we take for granted, you feel like praising God for the way He has worked in their lives, and what fruits a few missionaries have had the privilege of helping to cultivate. It is an unforgettable experience to have a part in the building of the Church of Jesus Christ here in Congo.

OFF THE RECORD....

THIS issue of *Congo News Letter* was gotten together during the rather hectic days of preparation for and the entertaining of the Missionary Retreat and Missionary-Congolese *conseil* at Banza Manteke. Preparation involves many things : Ordering food from the States many months in advance. Arranging with Congolese villagers to deliver papaya, grapefruit, bananas, palm nuts, plaintains and avacados on specified dates so they will be ripe enought to use on the days needed. Purchasing of the necessary dishes and utensils to feed the from 56 to 124 people who were present at various time during the 11 days of meetings. Making mattress covers and filling them with grass and rounding up bedding and beds and cribs (White Cross cases with improvements) for adults, children and babies that would be present. Moving stoves and piping in water and wiring in an outside light

to the Women's Center which would serve as dining room. Painting and DDTing — over the scant week-end that bridged the gap between the school children's departure for vacation and the arrival of the "conferees" —— the large women's center and the 11 or 12 class-rooms and two "model" houses that served as sleeping rooms for many of the delegates.

All that and much more — . In this issue first termer *Martha Emmert* gives a summary of what "conference" feels like to a newcomer.

The great high-point of the Missionary Retreat was the series of excellent talks given each evening by new ABFMS Foreign Secretary for the Congo, *James. L. Sprigg*. Coming from one term of missionary service in the Philippines to service in an entirely different land, his grasp of the Congo situation and analysis of the problems, needs and accomplishments of each portion of our field — as shown by his addresses and his participation in the business sessions — were almost uncanny. Certainly it indicated the zeal, hard work and attention to detail which has characterized his preparation for the field trip to Congo and his understanding of what he has seen since coming here. The talks were slanted to the missionary to help him in his daily work so might not be of general interest for the CNL, but "Lift Up Your Eyes", the introduction to one address, and "This is Our Task" on page 3, his paraphrasal of some of Paul's words, will stir the interest of the CNL reader and give him some inkling of Mr. Sprigg's talent for the "apt phrase."

Visitors who also were enjoyed very much by us, but whose duties at home would not let them stay long enough to participate in the Retreat were *Dr. and Mrs. Edward B. Willingham*. Dr. Willingham, General Secretary of the Mission Board, tells "What He Heard" in Africa on page 11.

Congo Protestant Council delegate to the recent mission conferences on the West Coast of Africa was our Léopoldville pastor, Jean Lubikulu. At this writing he is in Belgium, at government expense, helping with the Protestant exhibit at the Brussels World Fair. But in this issue of CNL he tells a bit about his trip to Nigeria and Ghana.

— R. U.

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